

# FACT SHEET

## Disaster Unemployment Assistance Information

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is a federal program that provides financial assistance and employment services to jobless workers and the self-employed when they are unemployed as a direct result of a major natural disaster.

A major disaster means any hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, high water, wind-driven water or tidal wave, earthquake, drought, fire or other catastrophe declared by the President to warrant government assistance to communities and individuals.

### *Who is Eligible for DUA?*

When a major disaster has been declared by the President, DUA is generally available to any unemployed worker or self-employed individual who lived, worked, or was scheduled to work in the disaster area at the time of the disaster; and due to the disaster:

- no longer has a job or a place to work; or
- cannot reach the place of work; or
- cannot work due to damage to the place of work; or
- cannot work because of an injury caused by the disaster.

An individual who becomes the head of household and is seeking work because the former head of household died as a result of the disaster may also qualify for DUA benefits.

### *Benefit Payments*

DUA consists of weekly payments that are computed in the same way as regular unemployment insurance (UI) payments, that is, figured on a base period of earnings as prescribed by state UI law. The base period for all DUA claimants is the most recently completed tax year prior to their last date worked. For most claimants this is the prior calendar year.

The exception to this is that unemployed self-employed individuals may base a claim on net self-employment earnings. They may use an alternate tax year, but it must still be their most recently completed tax year.

The weekly amount will be approximately 50 percent of the average weekly wage up to a maximum of \$625.00 per week and a minimum of \$196 per week, plus \$25.00 for each eligible dependent child.

Under federal regulations, weekly DUA payments are reduced by:

- partial earnings;
- any insurance for wage loss due to illness or disability;
- supplemental UI benefits resulting from union agreements; or
- private income protection insurance.

### *Duration of Benefits*

DUA benefits are payable only for weeks that fall within the Disaster Assistance Period, which begins June 5, 2011 and ends December 17, 2011.

### *Restrictions on Entitlement*

DUA benefits are not payable to individuals who are entitled to unemployment compensation or waiting period credit; or who would be entitled to unemployment compensation benefits or waiting period credit if not for excessive earnings or for being fully employed. Any eligible individual whose entitlement to unemployment compensation exhausts before the end of the Disaster Assistance Period is entitled to DUA benefits for the remaining weeks of unemployment in the Disaster Assistance Period, or until a new valid benefit year becomes available, whichever is earlier.

### *How To Apply*

In order to be eligible for DUA, an individual must first file a regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) claim. If the disaster affected individual is determined eligible for a regular UI claim, they must receive regular UI benefits in lieu of DUA benefits. To apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance an individual must call and file a claim for unemployment benefits with the Department of Unemployment Assistance at 617-626-6800.

An equal opportunity employer/program.  
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request individuals with disabilities.